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ABSTRACT

Intuitive Eating: its relationship with Body Mass Index, Internalized Weight Stigma, and Perceived Stress levels among young adults in the West Bank.

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Background: Intuitive Eating (IE) offers a refreshing approach to counter the dieting culture by emphasizing the importance of listening to our body's natural cues of hunger and satiety. For quite some time now, it has garnered a lot of attention due to numerous studies highlighting its ability to reduce Perceived Stress (PS), Body Mass Index (BMI), and Internalized Weight Stigma (IWS), which refers to the societal devaluation of individuals who are perceived to be overweight. Given the limited knowledge about IE within the Palestinian community, this study aims to assess the impact of IE on BMI, PS, and IWS levels in individuals aged 20-28, specifically those from a Palestinian background, particularly in the West Bank.

Method: This study focused on describing and examining the relationships between variables. Participants between the ages of 20 and 28, who do not engage in bodybuilding or weightlifting activities and are not pregnant, were eligible to take part in the study. A Closed_xFFFE_question online survey was conducted, encompassing various sections including demographic background, Cohen's Perceived Stress Score (PSS-10), Weight Self Stigma (WSSQ-12), and IE Scale (IES-2). With SPSS Statistics 23.00, the data were analyzed based on the scores of each section.

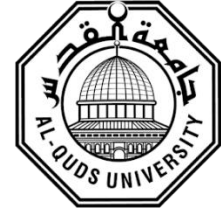
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Results: There were a total of 215 participants, with 152 (70.7%) being females and 63 (29.3%) being males. Here is a breakdown of the percentages: the majority of participants (59.1%) were students, followed by workers or employed participants (22.3%), unemployed participants (11.6%), and participants who were both students and workers/employed (7%). Regarding the correlational findings, it was observed that individuals in specific job roles may exhibit decreased levels of IE behaviors in comparison to their counterparts, with statistical significance at ($p < 0.05$). Additionally, statistical analysis revealed a significant relationship ($p < 0.05$); between increased levels of IE and a lower BMI, indicating a negative correlation.

Conversely, it was found that heightened stress and a negative psychological state were linked to lower levels of IE, indicating a negative relationship. In addition, there was a moderate positive relationship between IE and IWS. Furthermore, it was found that gender and age had no influence on the implementation of IE.

Conclusion: IE has an impact on various aspects such as psychological state, BMI, and IWS to varying degrees. Additional qualitative research may provide valuable insights into the actual impact of IE on the Palestinian population.